



**The 43rd General Assembly
ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
20 - 25 November 2022
Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia**

STATEMENT

First Plenary Session

**Hon. Raymond Democrito C. Mendoza
Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Congress of the Philippines**

Your Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin,
President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and
President of the 43rd AIPA General Assembly;

Your Excellencies' Speakers of AIPA Member Parliaments;

Heads of AIPA Member Delegations and Observer Delegations;

Secretaries-General of ASEAN and AIPA;

Heads and Members of Guests of the Host Parliament;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my privilege to deliver a statement on behalf of the Philippine delegation in the 43rd AIPA General Assembly. I am elated to finally see all of you in person today after two years of virtual meetings. For that, I wish to express my appreciation to our host, the National Assembly of Cambodia, for the excellent arrangements for this meeting, and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to our delegation.
2. As we speak today, our nation is reeling from the havoc wreaked by Typhoon Paeng that caused billions in damages, claiming 158 lives thus far. This is merely one of the many typhoons we confront nowadays—marked by more intensity and stronger and more frequent landfalls. These disasters becoming more devastating only confirms that the calamitous chapter of climate change is indeed upon us. Thus, President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.'s words become more urgent than ever before: “climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nations and peoples. There is no other problem so global in nature that it requires a united effort.”
3. The Philippines’ firmly supports this year’s theme of a sustainable, inclusive and resilient ASEAN. With less favorable regional policy settings, we must be nimble to navigate this complex environment, strengthen economic recovery, and rebuild policy space. This will not be our last crisis. We must therefore rebuild, and continuously innovate and learn as we prepare for the next crisis.
4. Regional solidarity and cooperation are vital to help build back a more resilient and sustainable ASEAN community. The AIPA

represents an effective platform for dialogue on inter-parliamentary concerns and diplomacy based on equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

5. In the 43rd AIPA General Assembly, we will have an opportunity to take stock of the gains achieved in the past years, and to look ahead on how to sustain the relevance of ASEAN relations in the post-pandemic era. Through this cooperation, we expect to facilitate more people-to-people contact in the region to foster deeper social cohesion and resilient global and regional economies.
6. In this spirit, allow me to share with you our roadmap [in the 19th Congress] towards a stronger and more resilient economy. Following the lead of President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., we have adopted a medium-term fiscal strategy that aims to support economic recovery while ensuring fiscal sustainability.
7. Together with the Executive, we will focus on creating more job opportunities for Filipinos, and improve their employability. Productivity-enhancing investments will be promoted while exercising prudence in fiscal management. Moreover, we will pursue a more robust public-private partnership and upgrade the country's digital infrastructure by building back better through our *build, better, more* program. This is how we intend to go beyond job restoration to creating new and far more decent jobs.

8. We recognize the pandemic has exacerbated income insecurity, especially those without any access to social protection, and those working in the informal economy. Retooling and re-skilling to sharpen the competence of our jobseekers will be our priority, together with the development of sustainable technologies to create more green jobs.
9. The pandemic has pushed countries into a fiscal bind. While aggressive public spending is still needed for recovery, fiscal deficits across the region have widened, pushing public debt levels beyond acceptable threshold. This has reduced the ability of developing countries to spend their way out of the pandemic.
10. Our strong commitment to fiscal consolidation should enhance fiscal sustainability without undermining prospects of economic recovery. The pace of fiscal consolidation should be carefully calibrated as growth momentum is still nascent in the near-term. Consolidating too early to protect fiscal health may quell recovery, but waiting too long may diminish market confidence.
11. As we move forward to post-pandemic era, the AIPA must recognize the path to greater prosperity in the region is by greater regional cooperation and interdependence. At the same time, we must be aware that mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity of Member States foster a positive environment across the region.
12. I urge my fellow parliamentarians to use this occasion as a

platform for dialogue and exchange of best practices. Let us coordinate our policies and efforts at the regional level. For example, dealing with the ongoing pandemic as well as future ones requires collaboration on policies on development, production and distribution of vaccines, and on policies to help our economies cope with adverse socio-economic impacts. This requires no less than a collective effort in the sharing of data and technologies as well as financial resources at the regional level.

13. Finally, I call upon my fellow parliamentarians that we immediately correct climate injustice. While the wealthy nations are responsible for the significant bulk of greenhouse gas emissions, it is developing nations, such as ours, that unfortunately suffer the most. Hence, we now have to seek to build collective global rules whereby the industrial nations progressively reduce emissions and provide badly-needed climate adaptation support to vulnerable countries in line with the united nations framework convention on climate change and the Paris Agreement.
14. Let me conclude this message by conveying our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, for the excellent preparation on this year's General Assembly, as well as for the warm gesture extended to all its delegates.
20. We wish you a successful and productive meeting and, most of all, a peaceful, safe and prosperous ASEAN! Thank you and I

wish all of you good health.